

I CLAIM:

1. A method of identifying the edges of a document being scanned in a scanner, wherein the scanner includes an optical element having a focal plane, the method comprising the steps of:

positioning a width detection backer simultaneously in the field of view of the optical element of the scanner and out of the focal plane of the optical element;

positioning a portion of a document in the optical path between the optical element and the width detection backer;

scanning the portion of the document with the optical element;
and

analyzing information from the scanning step to identify data indicative of an edge of the document.

2. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the step of positioning a portion of the document in the optical path comprises spacing the document from the width detection backer.

3. The method of **claim 2**, wherein the step of positioning a portion of the document in the optical path additionally comprises positioning the portion of the document substantially at the focal plane of the optical element.

4. The method of **claim 1**, wherein the step of positioning a portion of a document in the optical path between optical element and the width detection backer comprises holding the optical element stationary and moving the document past the optical element along a document path.

5. The method of **claim 4**, wherein the step of scanning the portion of the document comprises moving the document relative to the optical element.

6. The method of **claim 5**, additionally comprising the step of holding the width detection backer stationary relative to the optical element during the scanning step.

7. The method of **claim 6**, additionally comprising the step of selectively positioning the width detection backer out of the field of view of the optical element.

8. The method of **claim 7**, wherein:

the step of positioning a width detection backer simultaneously in the field of view of the optical element of the scanner and out of the focal plane of the optical element comprises rotating a structure containing the width detection backer about an axis that is positionally fixed relative to the optical element; and

the step of positioning the width detection backer out of the field of view of the optical element comprises rotating the structure containing the width detection backer about the axis.

9. The method of **claim 1**, additionally comprising the step of selectively positioning the width detection backer out of the field of view of the optical element.

10. The method of **claim 9**, wherein:

the step of positioning a width detection backer simultaneously in the field of view of the optical element of the scanner and out of the focal plane of the optical element comprises rotating a structure containing the width detection backer about an axis that is positionally fixed relative to the optical element; and

the step of positioning the width detection backer out of the field of view of the optical element comprises rotating the structure containing the width detection backer about the axis.

11. The method of **claim 9**, additionally comprising, during the step of selectively positioning the width detection backer out of the field of view of the optical element, the step of selectively positioning an additional backer in the field of view of the optical element.

12. The method of **claim 11**, additionally comprising the steps of:

providing the width detection backer with a first color; and

providing the additional backer with a second color that contrasts with the first color.

13. An apparatus for a document scanner, the apparatus comprising a substantially cylindrical casing having a longitudinal central axis and an outer surface, wherein:

a portion of the outer surface encompassing a first segment of the circumference of the outer surface of the casing forms a width detection backer, wherein the width detection backer portion of the outer surface is closer to the longitudinal central axis of the casing than is another portion of the outer surface; and

the width detection backer portion of the outer surface and the other portion of the outer surface are of contrasting colors.

14. The apparatus of **claim 13**, wherein the width detection backer portion of the outer surface of the casing is substantially flat.

15. The apparatus of **claim 14**, wherein the width detection backer portion of the outer surface is substantially black, and the other portion of the outer surface is substantially white.

16. A document scanner comprising:

an optical element having a field of view;

a width detection backer; and

a driver operatively connected to selectively position the width detection backer and the optical element relative one another so that the width detection backer is simultaneously in the field of view of the optical element and out of the focal plane of the optical element.

17. The document scanner of **claim 16**, additionally comprising a structure, wherein:

the width detection backer is on the structure; and

the driver is operatively connected to the structure to selectively position the structure so that the width detection backer simultaneously in the field of view of the optical element and out of the focal plane of the optical element, and to selectively position structure so that an additional portion of the structure is in the field of view of the optical element.

18. The document scanner of **claim 17**, wherein the width detection backer and the additional portion of the structure have contrasting colors.

19. The document scanner of **claim 18**, wherein the structure comprises a substantially cylindrical casing having a longitudinal central axis and an outer surface, wherein:

a portion of the outer surface encompassing a first segment of the circumference of the outer surface of the casing forms the width detection backer; and

the width detection backer portion of the outer surface is closer to the longitudinal central axis of the casing than is another portion of the outer surface.

20. The document scanner of **claim 19**, wherein the width detection backer portion of the outer surface of the casing is substantially flat.